

# Partnerships



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service  
Air Program

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February, 2006

## Background

With a small staff and no budget line item, the Air Program depends on partnerships to get work done (**Table 1**). Because our role is advisory, negotiation and communication skills are integral to success.

**Table 1.** Air program partners.

Activity	Partners
Deposition monitoring	National Atmospheric Deposition Program
Visibility monitoring	Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments
Ozone monitoring	Forest Service Inventory and Analysis.
Other monitoring and decision-making	Tribal governments, state agencies, environmental groups, industry, universities, and the US Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Geological Survey.
Other monitoring and management	Forest Service Fire, Water, Wilderness, Forest Service Research, Forest Health Monitoring.

## Successes

Air Program partnerships reap many rewards. Our work addresses the Chief's threats: Fires and Fuels, Unmanaged Recreation and Invasive Species. We help fire staff to monitor smoke impacts and ensure that air quality standards and regulations are met. We help ensure that air pollution impacts on ecosystems, including changes in biodiversity and community composition, are understood and addressed (**Fig 1**). Our partnerships with Recreation include the 10-Year Wilderness Strategy and understanding visitors' value of clean, fresh air and scenic vistas.

### Four Corners Task Force:

Convened by New Mexico and Colorado to study air pollution in the Four Corners Region and develop mitigation options, membership includes local citizens, interest groups, local governments, industry, tribes, state and federal agencies, and three Regional Foresters. A key goal is to prevent non-



**Fig 1.** Air Program staff receive the Chief's award for Partnerships in Ecosystem Management.



**Fig 2.** Landmark partnerships with First Nations.

attainment in northwestern New Mexico for National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Failure to meet standards can result in federal sanctions and loss of state highway funds, devastating for the state's tourist-dependent economy.

### Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission/ Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP):

The Southwestern Region Air Program led a landmark interagency partnership to improve air quality since 1991. Tribal governors and First Nations' presidents now join state and federal officials to develop and implement a strategy to reduce regional air pollution transport (**Fig 2**). The Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission covered 4 states, but its 1997 successor, WRAP, encompasses 14 states. Committee and forum members include small businesses, consulting firms, electric utilities, other industries, environmental groups, universities and private citizens. WRAP successes led to formation of four more Regional Partnership Organizations, including all states.

## Challenges

- The time commitment to form new partnerships has greatly expanded and it is increasingly difficult to fund existing partnerships.

- Securing Forest level funds for visibility and deposition monitoring, not approved as a Regional Priority, is a struggle in the Southwestern Region.. Also,



**Fig 3.** Forest Service Air Program

the Carson

National Forest had trouble funding their small portion to sample snow at two locations in cooperation with USGS.